SOME NEW BOOKS.

A Life of Mrs. Stowe.

A centenary biography of *Harriet Beecher Stowe* is published by the Houghton Mifflin Company in convenient proximity to the hundredth anniversary of her birth, June 14. The book is illustrated by portraits of Mrs. Stowe and pictures of the houses in which she lived, her birthplace at Litchfield, Conn.; the picturesque frame house at Brunswick, Me., where the greater part of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was written, and the more pretentious place in Andover where Mrs. Stowe enjoyed some of the most prosperous years of her laborious life after the acceptance by her husband, Prof. Calvin Ellis Stowe, of a chair in the Theological Seminary. The biography is largely a labor of love on the part of her son, CHARLES EDWARD STOWE, and of her grandson, LYMAN BEECHER STOWE, who have written gracefully, with none of the ponderous solemnity of the self-conscious biographer, the story of a famous woman's development amid national conditions already obsolete. Division into chapters independent of the narrative as a whole is a result of the original scattered publication of the biography in magazine form. Mrs. Stowe's life at the zenith of her fame is touched upon lightly, and unexpected emphasis is laid on the years of her obscurity and unwitting preparation for the task of awakening a nation's conscience. The book comes with a special message to the younger generation of to-day, in whose hands is the making of that reconstructed to-morrow of which the wisest among us may not prophesy.

Literary aspirants may meditate profitably upon this study from life to learn anew how entirely great writing is dependent upon intense living. The present literary situation in the United States is unique. That romantic abstraction the "Grim Reaper" has demonstrated an underlying and terrible reality in the recent exceptional mortality among American men and women of letters. The reading public is all but reduced to foreign dependence or the necessity of new discoveries among native talent. The latter, for aught one can say to the contrary, may sit even now in pious patience at the very doors of our publishers, refusing, like Mordecai at the thief's gate, the ceremonial bow to current literary fashions and superstitions. Though of making many books there is still no end the fact remains that a process of elimination now offers exceptional opportunity for a first hearing to some strong and confident voice. Mrs. Stowe's biography is therefore especially interesting in the information it gives regarding the environment of her impressionable childhood, of her spiritual development through successive stages as teacher, as wife and mother, and finally as the spokesman of a righteous cause at the time of national bewilderment preceding the civil war.

In the cultivation and discipline of that "spirit that quickeneth" the youthful Harriet Beecher had nothing to ask. From the outset her environment was poor in luxuries that to-day would be rated as necessities; but at no point was it cheap or commonplace. The book gives us an inspiring picture of the old New England dominie Lyman Beecher, "father of more brains than any man in America," as his countrymen were yet to hail him, surrounded by the eleven children who were to add this distinction to those his scholarship and moral preeminence had already earned for him. "How I wish Harriet were a boy; she would do more than any of them," said this father of future orators, teachers, theologians and writers as his keen eye noted the child's absorption in the household task at hand, her disdain of an aching back or tired muscles when the cutting and piling of the winter supply of wood called upon the cooperative resources of the family. It was his custom amid the manual labor necessary in a servantless community to beguile the time and improve the occasion by starting among his children an argument upon some moot question in morals and theology. He would assume the task of devil's advocate in order to educate his youthful casuists in the detection of sophistical allurement or logical flaws. Before the age of feminine education he would include the girls as well as boys in these informal lycea, saying, when the children failed in insight, "The argument is thus and so; now if you will take this position you will trip me up."

With such mental environment it is not surprising to find Harriet at the tender age of 9 years writing in school on "The Difference Between the Natural and the Moral Sublime," nor is it difficult of belief that in the comparative maturity of 11 she took honors with an essay defending the negative of the theme, "Can the Immortality of the Soul be Proved by the Light of Nature?" After the reading of this before the assembled literati of Litchfield her father arose to inquire the name of the anonymous author. An instructor, proud of his pupil and appreciating the zest of the situation, replied, "Your daughter, sir!" Mrs. Stowe classed this incident as the proudest moment of a life that was to know the joy of international fame. It is worth noting in passing that such themes were not tribute paid to the Beecher reputation for intellect but tasks set as matter of course for the children of the public schools in a day when the pretty sentimentalities of the kindergarten were not passed on to the older grades.

Books and book lore were common in the Beecher household; not light fiction, which a contemporary French critic has defined as "the opium of the Occident," but sermons and philosophies, the writings of teachers such as Jonathan Edwards and Cotton Mather being softened only by the gentler allegories of "Pilgrim's Progress" and similar works. Through these high austerities it remained for the sun touched Orient to flood a warmer influence upon the mind of the child Harriet. The chance discovery of a tattered copy of the "Arabian Nights" at the bottom of a barrel of old sermons gave to her a daily delight. To the unconscious reader the book became a model in dramatic narrative and pictorial richness; her command of these great qualities in her later work is directly attributable to this unexpected Oriental tutoring.

A second mitigation of the bracing mental atmosphere of her home was the gentle art of music. She classes as one of the great events of her childhood the fortunate accident which placed a fine piano within the means of a poor country parson. "The Ark of the Covenant was not brought into the Tabernacle with more gladness than this magical instrument into our abode. Father soon learned to accompany the piano with his violin and brothers Edward and William to perform their part on their flutes. So we had domestic concerts which if they did not attain the height of artistic perfection filled the house with gladness." This joyous spirit is described as abiding undisturbed in the Beecher household in spite of readings such as "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," which provoked even gentle Mrs. Beecher into an unexpected protest that it was a slander upon the character of her heavenly Father. It is even probable that the general hilarity was a natural reaction against the stern Calvinism of the family creed.

Another influence, the power of which was absorbed unconsciously, to manifest itself later in life, was that of a seafaring uncle, Capt. Samuel Foote, who returned from his voyages gift laden with embroideries from the Orient, with ingots of silver from the carved tombs of the Incas, with Moorish tokens from the Alhambra. His experience of life at first hand led him into humorous combat with his book taught brother-in-law, and the youthful Harriet heard him defend the superior honesty of the Turks over the Christians and wondered over his constant tributes to the noble piety of the Roman Catholic priests and laymen whom he had met on his travels. This heresy, amazing to the daughter of a hundred Puritans, found expression in her first successful book, a geography published early in her career as a teacher, which drew from Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati a public appreciation for its unprejudiced handling of the Catholic question. The incident shows how successfully her father educated rather than formed and controlled the minds of his talented children, for the book was issued during his presidency of the Lane Theological Seminary of Ohio, to which he was called with the avowed intention of counterating the growing influence of the Catholic Church in the middle West.

The beauty of the hills and lakes of her native Litchfield, the cold brilliancy of its northern skies are not to be overlooked amid the formative influences of Harriet Beecher's childhood. It was not an age of toy shops; the children found their pleasures in the open air, fishing, boating, garden making, exploring the woods for their mossy treasures. Doubtless this outdoor life garnered a vitality which alone gave victory to the overstimulated soul when the clash of a stern creed with a heart tender to all suffering brought the impressionable girl to the verge of our fashionable modern malady, nervous prostration. For this morbid condition she took not a rest cure but a work cure, sweating out the grim horrors of the old theories and attaining through practical experience a more gentle conception of the universal Creator. In this struggle and its conclusion she was followed by her orator brother, Henry Ward Beecher. The drudgery of her work as a teacher, first at Hartford in 1829 and in the modern schools founded two years later by the family in Cincinnati effectually controlled her tendency to brood upon her emotions, a still more stringent training in meeting life at its sternest coming to her when in 1836 she married the scholarly but impoverished professor Calvin Ellis Stowe, the widowed husband of her dearest friend. Her daily, hourly struggle to build up a family of six children on the meagre income of a country parson, himself a gentle dreamer but of slight practical help, made living more important to her than theorizing about it. She welcomes the birth of a child as an opportunity for two weeks of unaccustomed rest from household tasks that seemed never done. Her literary work before marriage had been a social accomplishment; afterward it was valued only as a means of piecing out her insufficient income. Brief stories and love tales were written amid the manifold distractions of nursery and kitchen, when the speeding of the pen was frequently arrested to give instructions and exhortations to servant and children. These served to make financial ends meet without definitely ranking Mrs. Stowe as an artist. Perhaps the true reward of these workworn years found expression in a message sent to this domestic heroine at a time when instead of the palm of martyrdom fame had unexpectedly crowned her with laurel. In a letter from George Eliot the greeting from the greatest woman writer of her day was this: "You have had a longer experience than I as a writer and a fuller experience as a woman, since you have borne children and known a mother's history from the beginning."

Here was the main source of Mrs. Stowe's power as a novelist; books and living joined equally in the training of mind and heart. The death of her three sons, one in his infancy during a cholera epidemic, one in youth by drowning, the third in maturity, the last under circumstances particularly harrowing, more than the hardships of poverty and ill health made of Mrs. Stowe a woman of sorrow, so acquainted with grief that her pen was red with her own heart's blood when she wrote of the slave mothers of the South. Toil and grief so wore upon her endurance that at the prime of life she describes herself for the benefit of an unknown admirer of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" with words whose pleasant humor cloak their tragic significance:

"I am a little bit of a woman, somewhat more than 40, just as thin and dry as a piece of snuff; never much to look at in my best days and looking like a used up article now."

To read of Mrs. Stowe's home life, alike caretaker and companion to her children, managing business and home for her absent minded husband, consulting with cook, with butcher, baker and candlestick maker, directing mechanics and "handy" men of varying proficiency, is to marvel how the overburdened homeseeker found energy and concentration, to say nothing of unclaimed time, to write so bulky a novel as "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Little preliminary study was required. The author's finely trained mind had unconsciously accumulated data for its pages during many years, the most famous incidents having been matter of personal knowledge, while the moral indignation and consciousness of having a mission to perform drove the pen on however weary the hand that held it. Her life brought her into contact with the slavery problem at its best and worst, her experiences running back even to her early childhood, when the narrative of an aunt living in the West Indies thrilled her with horror, mingled memories of an early visit to the South, where the atmosphere of happiness, justice and kindliness furnished the groundwork for her idyllic picture of the St. Clair plantation, with her personal knowledge of conditions in Ohio, bordering on the slave States, where Mrs. Stowe talked with the dark skinned fugitives. Among these she met the originals of many of her best known characters.

The biography offers frequent testimony to Mrs. Stowe's lack of self-assertion or personal initiative in writing the book which more profoundly influenced her generation than any other single work of profane literature. The persuasions of her family to the task, as to a work of moral obligation, were required to call her attention to her own responsibility in bringing to the mind of her countrymen the evils of slaveholding as a system iniquitous alike to master and man. "God helping me, I will write something; I will if I live," she cried almost helplessly to her children who watched her read the letters from Boston detailing the scenes under the working of the infamous fugitive slave law, and employing her aid in the crusade. It needed the personal knowledge of an escaped slave, the Rev. Josiah Henson (the original of Uncle Tom) to spur her resolution on into definite action. She recalled his anguish to her memory during a communion service in her home church soon after her return. "Like the unrolling of a picture scroll," relates the biography, "the scene of the death of Uncle Tom seemed to pass before her. At the same time the words of Jesus were sounding in her ears, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me.' It seemed as though the glorified Christ were speaking to her through the black slave, cut and bleeding under the blows of the whip. She was affected so strongly that she could scarcely refrain from weeping aloud. That afternoon * * * she wrote out substantially as it appears in the published edition the chapter 'The Death of Uncle Tom.' As sufficient paper was not at hand she wrote a large part of it in pencil on some brown paper in which groceries had been delivered. It seemed to her as if what she wrote was blown through her mind as with the rushing of a mighty wind." Allowing for the influence of the national hysteria upon the supersensitive mind of Mrs. Stowe, the foregoing story is not difficult of credence, but classes itself with similar psychiatric manifestations which modern science to-day has under studious consideration. It will recall the recently published incident from the biography of Richard Wagner, wherein the great composer relates how the orchestral prelude to "Das Rheingold" passed from the realm of his sub-conscious mind, where it had long been, into the clear recognition of his normal mentality by means of an entranced condition induced by exhaustion.

This fragmentary attempt at a novel on the slavery question was pushed aside by other demands upon Mrs. Stowe's time, awaiting its chance discovery by Prof. Stowe. He urged the building of a book around the sketch already written, prophesying optimistically that such a work might reward her efforts with money sufficient to buy a new silk gown. Thus encouraged, Mrs. Stowe went earnestly to her task, publishing the novel first as a serial in the *National Era*. Beginning June 5, 1851, it was announced to run for three months but grew under Mrs. Stowe's hand, developing unexpectedly from issue to issue, so that it was only completed in April, 1852. It was at once published in book form, and 10,000 copies were sold within a week of publication. A year saw more than 300,000 copies in circulation. Eight power presses running day and night could not supply the demand. The vogue crossed the Atlantic Ocean and aroused a storm of emotional excitement in England, France, Germany and Italy. The reaction was as sharp as the enthusiasm had been sudden. Led by the *Times* of London, the cry against the book was taken up in this country; even the religious press was not silent in the campaign of scurrilous abuse, until the pandemonium and praise might well have deafened the ears and bewildered the brain of the astonished cause of the turmoil.

Her visit to England, where she was royally entertained by the men and women most prominent in the arts and in social life, is to-day a more than twice told tale. Her letters show that these honors were received with the naive delight of a child, yet without detracting from the serene dignity of one who was by natural endowment a gentlewoman. Her spiritual poise and rich mental endowment won for Mrs. Stowe not only the passing admiration of her time but also the life friendship of such men and women as Mr. and Mrs. Browning, George Eliot and her husband, Lady Byron, Charles Kingsley, the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, the Duke and Duchess of Argyle, Lord Shaftesbury and Lord Carlisle, the latter furnishing the preface when "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was published in England.

The appeal of this novel in its own day, its importance to its own generation of readers, requires no explanation, being self-evident.

To reread "Uncle Tom's Cabin" to-day is a curious experiment. The modernist will be astonished at the prevalence of advanced doctrine in a book outlawed by historical changes and outmoded by contemporary æsthetic ideals. In an age in which the childless home is perilously near a popular ideal few will be affected by Victorian sentimentality such as the death of little Eva, guaranteed to dissolve the less critical communities of half a century ago into collectivist tears. Nevertheless, so much of youthful fire yet remains to this famous old novel that serious students will find in its pages much talk of what to-day we call socialism, fresh and vigorous as when it was put by the author into the mouth of Augustine St. Clair, a hero whose name suggests the pastry shop rather than an exponent of Weltpolitik. None of our present "literature of revolt" can surpass "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in moral earnestness or fiery appeal. The jaded seeker for amusement will find in its pages a dramatic power and pictorial richness of which our light fiction to-day is well nigh bankrupt. In an era when religious thought or discussion is as forbidden to general fiction as both are taboo in drawing room conversation, Mrs. Stowe's unaffected, unforced references to sacred subjects serve to recall the time when these were still generally current amid a churchgoing nation. There are many readers who will find profit in a fresh perusal of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and this centennial biography of its celebrated author.

The Social Basis of Religion.

Among American economists of the present day there is perhaps none whose views are marked by greater originality than those of Prof. SIMON N. PATTEN, who holds the chair for political economy at the University of Pennsylvania; but the originality displayed in his latest work, intended to set forth *The Social Basis of Religion* (the Macmillan Company) is of a kind to call forth opposition rather than assent even from those who approach his exposition in an impartial and unprejudiced spirit. It is not easy to approach without prejudice a work that lacks an index and that has not even a table of contents. An index is particularly called for in a work that covers so many subjects as Prof. Patten's venture into a field that is new for an economist. It would have been a great aid to the reader in following Prof. Patten's rather intricate and at times bewildering thought if he had added a table of contents or placed at the head of each of the fifteen chapters an analysis of the views and thoughts presented. As it is the reader is forced to keep in his memory a mass of propositions in order to be sure that he understands the aim in view.

What is a reader to do when he is told (page 6) that the Renaissance with its revival of Greek learning and the modern emphasis of nature which we are told stand out prominently as causes of the change of culture that has paralyzed religious thought are due, when interpreted in economic terms, to "the shifting of civilization from southern regions subject to famine, disease and war to those of the north, where peace, security and prosperity abound?" That "peace, security and prosperity" abound in northern regions may be true, but it requires proof. The feudal system, the Thirty Years war, the French Revolution, Russian tyranny and Russian famines, the civil war of our own country and the inroads made upon the prosperity of northern nations by the maintenance of standing armies and floating navies of huge proportions unprecedented in the history of mankind are awkward facts that cannot be lightly brushed aside and against which we have merely the assertion that "famine, disease and war" are the products of southern civilizations. For exaggerated generalizations commend us to the economist! The book fairly bristles with such generalizations. So we are told (p. 48) "that ideas come at the end of a period of progress and not at its beginning," as though there could be any progress without ideas.

Again (p. 60) we are told, rather inconsistently, that "ideas preceded the beliefs in society." Why? Do not beliefs lead to ideas quite as naturally as ideas to beliefs? Nor is it true that "beliefs start in individuals and at first reflect only personal experience," since the earliest religious beliefs rest upon an experience common to all mankind, the impression made upon the mind by the phenomena of nature. Prof. Patten's fondness for turning things topsy-turvy sometimes touches up his book with an unconscious bit of humor. So he prefers in all seriousness to interpret the old saying (page 160) "that barking dogs never bite" to be due to the fact that the dog uses up his aroused energy in barking instead of biting. Nor is Prof. Patten always consistent in his generalizations. In one place (p. 35) we are told that "as biologic beings we are to-day what our ancestors were when historians began to keep records," while elsewhere (p. 9) he says that "our heredity calls for a life of ninety years, some say 150 years," but that owing to physical decline the average age of man "previous to the last century was not more than thirty years." Surely so profound a change cannot go without an alteration in our "biologic being." Even though the causes of the decline may be explained by changes in economic conditions, that does not alter the fact that both moral and physical decline involve changes in structure and "biological traits."

Again in the preface he disputes the correctness of the order in Comte's three stages of man's development, the theological, the metaphysical and the positive. Indentifying the "theological" with the "traditional" stage he declares that this comes after the "deductive or metaphysical stage," but further on (p. 90) he appears to give the preference to the "pragmatic" as the third stage and sets up the order "theological, metaphysical and pragmatic" for the race; and faith, scepticism and idealism for the individual. We are asked to believe "that individuals tend to become idealistic, but the societies of which they are a part move steadily toward the pragmatic god"—and so we are left in the dark as to whether Prof. Patten finally agrees to differ with Comte or first differs and then agrees, or agrees and differs both.

The two thousand years and more of religious history before the advent of Jesus are entirely ignored by Prof. Patten, and equally so the many religious movements of worldwide importance, such as Islamism, that have ensued since Christianity made its appearance. Of more modern religious phenomena the only one that Prof. Patten takes into account is Comte's Positivism and the only philosophical movement is Pragmatism. He takes from both what suits his purpose, with the result of giving us a definition of religion that is a purely subjective bit of speculation, while his conception of Christianity is only a degree less arbitrary. His view of religion is unquestionably original, but can it endure the test of historical criticism? It is hardly to be expected that it should since Prof. Patten deliberately ignores the greater portion of mankind's religious history. But before taking this up let us see how the matter stands with his view of Chritianity, of which he evidently has taken into consideration at least some of its historical phases.

Prof. Patten says (p. 4) that the Christian scheme of salvation, and that means Christianity in general, "has fallen into disrepute not because it lacks proof but because its historical setting has been lost through the increase of knowledge and through better methods of investigation." Here again we have one of those startling assertions of which the book is full but for which no proof is offered. As matter of fact, improved methods of investigation pursued by modern scholarship have served to place the origin of Christianity in a better historical setting. The last decades, more particularly, have also brought to light some additional material for the study, and although there are still unsolved problems in this field we are now in a better position than before to understand the religious movement which centres around the name of Jesus.

The decay of faith in the gods of Greek and Roman mythology, marked as decay in timeworn beliefs invariably is by a recrudescence of mystical cults, constitutes one of the primal factors in the welcome which the Pauline scheme of salvation through the Christ received outside of Palestine, while within the area of specifically Jewish thought the influx of Greek philosophy and Hellenistic points of view had brought about equally significant changes. The political decline of the Jewish State, that had dwindled to a mere shadow without substance at the time that Jesus was born, paved the way for the complete divorce of religious aspirations from political ambitions and brought about the division of the Jews into two parties, the one still clinging to the forlorn hope of a political resurrection, the other prepared to receive the message that the kingdom of God was not of this world and that the new era to which mankind was to look forward was a resurrection of the spirit. These are some of the main factors which according to modern historical scholarship are involved in the birth of Christianity.

Now what does Prof. Patten make of all this? Boldly setting aside the historical aspects, he maintains that "if we make religion social instead of historical, proof can be found for its essential doctrines." Once more equating religion with Christianity in a manner as though this were to be taken for granted, he sets up ten doctrines as the essential features of the Christian scheme of salvation, "expressed in social instead of theological terms." Incidentally it will be observed that he quietly shifts his basis from "historical" to "theological"—as though again these two terms were synonymous. The first of these ten doctrines curiously enough is that of "one supreme God." If this method of expressing the doctrine is not "theological," pray what does the term mean? The last of the ten doctrines is that "the wages of sin is death," when once more we have an expression that is surely quite as much theological as social. In between, however, we have a number of religious doctrines which are expressed in terms that might fairly be regarded as social. They include the "doctrine of the fall of man or social degeneration," the doctrine of regeneration, of a personal uplift through contact, influence and suggestion, the doctrine of progress through peace and love, the doctrine of the Messiah which Prof. Patten equates with "lofty inspiring leadership," the doctrine of service, of social and personal responsibility.

Now all this is very well, and the enumeration furnishes food for suggestive thought; but is this Christianity? Is it the Christian scheme of salvation or is it not rather Prof. Patten's scheme—and one well worth considering—as the "Social Basis of Religion"? He sets forth this scheme in the "Introduction" to his book and one cannot therefore avoid the suspicion that Prof. Patten has unconsciously anticipated his conclusions by starting out with premises that already embody his conclusions. Suppose the reviewer, who is not an economist, felt called upon to summarize Prof. Patten's theories of political economy, would not the demand be just that he should state these theories on the basis of Prof. Patten's writings, or if some one proposed to set forth the doctrines of present day English socialism would he not be expected to do so on the basis of the writings of English socialists of acknowledged authority? Will Prof. Patten point to a single Christian theologian, orthodox or unorthodox, who has defined Christianity or the Christian scheme of salvation in the way that he has done? Or, dropping the "Christian" and the "theologian," has any student of the history of Christianity ever defined Christianity in this way? Now Prof. Patten as an individual has the right to define Christianity in any way that he chooses, but Prof. Patten when attempting to show that the doctrines of Christianity can be justified when expressed in "social" terms must either take as his starting point the recognized conceptions of Christianity, as found in the works of authoritative students, or must justify his own conception if it differs from those found elsewhere; and he must also justify his premises by a historical study of the origins and history of Christianity. He does neither; in fact, as elsewhere, he makes assertions without offering any proof.

To equate, for example, the Christian doctrine of the Messiah with "lofty inspiring leadership" is to remove from the Christian doctrine its very essence, which consists, as is generally recognized, in the belief that through the vicarious sacrifice of the Messiah as the "Son of God" the original sin of humanity has been wiped out and that individual salvation can be secured through the acceptance of the belief that Jesus was this Messiah. "Lofty inspiring leadership" is surely not a prerogative of Christianity or of any particular religion. It is found everywhere where "lofty inspiring" beliefs are found, in Buddhism, in Chinese Taoism, in Islamism and certainly in Judaism. The Hebrew prophets represent "lofty inspiring leadership" without being Messiahs. St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Cardinal Newman, Emerson and Renan all represent "lofty inspiring leadership" in the field of religion without being Messiahs. What are we to say of an exposition of the Christian scheme of salvation which omits all reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, of the Virgin Birth, of the Resurreotion, of the Holy Communion, of the Last Judgment? Prof. Patten will answer that he does not regard these doctrines as essential features of Christianity; and he may be right, but he certainly cannot ignore them entirely at the outset of his discussion. He must at least justify the omission. As matter of fact not one of the doctrines in the form in which Prof. Patten puts them, with perhaps a single exception, is peculiar to Christianity, and some of the "doctrines" are not even doctrines in any proper sense of the word. The belief in one supreme God is shared by Christianity with other religions and was evolved in various parts of the ancient world long before Christianity appeared.

"Progress through peace and love in contrast with progress through conflict" is hardly a doctrine, certainly not in a religious sense. It may be regarded as the maxim of a social or even socialistic programme, without reference to any religious belief. The connection of "social responsibility" with the Christian scheme of salvation is at best loose, and when Prof. Patten contrasts this responsibility with "individual rights" he comes into direct conflict with the Christian scheme of salvation, which as ordinarily understood is primarily individual and only secondarily social. Some of the other "contrasts" set up in connection with Prof. Patten's "doctrines" are open to serious objections. After equating the doctrine of the Messiah with "lofty inspiring leadership" he contrasts the doctrine with the "material concept of civilization." Where is the connection between the two? Still stranger is the "doctrine of personal responsibility in contrast with fatalism or external domination." Why "fatalism"? Fatalism is as much a part of Christianity as of every other religious system that is based on the belief of an all powerful Being, however conceived, controlling man and the universe. But the fact that our fate is in the hands of such a Being does not throw aside the doctrine of personal responsibility, since personal responsibility may be part of the fate imposed upon us by "fatalism." As for "external domination," so far from being opposed to personal responsibility it is more readily conceivable that it should act as a further incentive to both personal and social responsibility.

The logical contrast of personal responsibility is recklessness, and so far from personal responsibility being a new doctrine introduced by Christianity or particularly characteristic of the Christian scheme of salvation it is an inherent and essential element of every system of ethics no matter to what religion such a system is attached. There is thus left of Prof Patten's "Scheme of Salvation" the one doctrine of the "fall of man" as a distinct feature of Christianity, and this he properly equates with "social degeneration." Here he has at last touched solid ground and accepts an element of the Christian scheme of salvation which is by general consent recognized as such, but with only one out of the ten doctrines enumerated as genuinely Christian we can hardly be expected to follow Prof. Patten in his further attempt of a justification of Christianity by shifting its teachings from a historical or theological basis to a social basis.

Fortunately, though there are many chapters in the book which have but a loose connection with religion, we are not left in serious doubt as to what religion is according to Prof. Patten. He "identifies religion not with morality but with the social reaction against degeneration and vice." That constitutes its "social basis." "Religion," he tells us elsewhere (p. 13), "begins not with a belief in God but with an emotional opposition to removable evils. It is a psychic reaction, not an intellectual conviction, and its one essential element is its programme for saving social outcasts." "Degeneration, regeneration and the will are thus religion's first problems from which all others are derived." Again (p. 101), "Religion is an expression of a reaction against conflict, degeneration and depravity; God's activity is the complement of man's endeavors to restore the normal and to elevate social standards"; and so elsewhere we find this thought, variously expressed, brought forward and driven home as the essence of religion. Quite consistently with this position Prof. Patten asserts (p. 101) that it is a "reversal of the order on which religions developed to make religion begin with God instead of basing it on the natural phenomena out of which it has arisen. The problem of God will lose its difficulties if men once became familiar with the laws making them fear degeneration and hope for regeneration. The key to religion lies in these problems."

Just here in his view of the order of development of religious ideas lies the crux of the whole matter. Prof. Patten repeats the mistake that he makes when defining Christianity. Instead of discussing the views of those who have made a special study of Christianity he gives his own definitions, which simply formulate, as we have seen, his view of the "social basis of religion." Had he carefully studied the works of the students of the history of religion, of such men as Tiele, Tylor, Max Müller, Réville, Fraser, Toy, Pfleiderer and others, he would have found that much as they differ on many points there is general acquiescence in the view that religion is due in its last analysis either to the instinct or to the conscious desire of man to secure the cooperation of powers recoghized by him as superior in carrying out his endeavors. Religion as matter of fact does not begin as a "psychic reaction," but with either a psychic or intellectual action, according as you take as your starting point a natural instinct or a conscious endeavor. Now degeneration, on which Prof. Patten lays his main stress, if it means anything, assumes an antecedent period of growth. Prof. Patten admits this, for he says (p. 9), "there was an earlier epoch when men attained their maximum of vigor and longevity." If therefore religion began while man was growing in the direction of "maximum vigor and longevity"—and Prof. Patten agrees that there has been no period in which and no race among which religion in some form has not existed—the proposition that religion is contemporary with a degenerating tendency and represents a reaction against it falls to the ground. In other words the "doctrine of the fall of man or social degeneration" is not the starting point of religion.

It would be nearer the truth to say that religion is coequal with the rise of man. Its "social basis" consists in its power to help the growth of man, not his struggle against decay. Religion is an integral part of the civilizing tendency in man and unless we are ready to regard civilization itself as a degenerative process, one of decay and not of growth, we must carry the social uplift of religion back to the period when man is developing his strength and not when he is fighting against degeneration and decay. From this point of view we can understand the significant fact, entirely overlooked apparently by Prof. Patten, that religion is at every stage in a people's life, in the period of growth as well as in the period of national or social decay, the most trustworthy index both of its civilization and of the defects in that civilization. So far from religion not starting from a belief in God or gods, the singular or the plural is immaterial for our purposes, we utterly fail in accounting for it unless we assume as the starting point the belief, whether as an instinct or a logical conclusion from circumstances borne in upon man by his experience, that there are powers about him or above him which directly affect his well being and whose cooperation is essential to him.

Prof. Patten, we have seen, in his desire to be original, a desire that grows at times into a veritable passion, makes many strange assertions without offering any proofs or even discussing them. One of the strangest is his conception of God, and since it is basic to his whole point of view it must be briefly discussed before we proceed to our conclusion. Touching upon the doctrine of the "supernatural" he says (p. 7) that "religion uses the language of the desert or of vile material surroundings. Hence nature is something bad, the bottom below which men cannot fall. The natural man is the degenerate, because he is the type such conditions evolve. To get away from nature means to approach God. With such ideas it is proper to speak of Him as supernatural." He contrasts with this the "cultural" idea in the language of which "nature is the highest, not the lowest category; for its terms have been coined by men in happy physical surroundings with nature at its best. To them the natural man is not the sudden brute of want and disease, but an ideal to be attained under favorable conditions." "Supernatural," he therefore concludes, has become a meaningless term because nature is the highest state and the natural man better than the best of men.

We will not press the inconsistency in which Prof. Patten involves himself by this view of the cultural attitude, since he has just told us a few pages earlier that the older southern civilizations, namely Babylonia, Egypt, Palestine, Greece, Rome and Asia Minor, were subject to "famine, disease and war," and elsewhere (pp. 36 and 186) he emphasizes the fact that "eastern Asia and southern Europe were in a state of physical decline during the period when its civilization was forming." If this is so, how is it possible that the terms of "cultural" language have been coined by men in happy physical surroundings? If space permitted, at least a dozen such contradictory points of view could be indicated, but we should like to ask Prof. Patten how he reconciles the view taken by him of the "religious" definition of nature with the statement on which he lays such stress, that religion represents the reaction against degenerate tendencies? The same factor cannot produce degeneration and react against it. But furthermore, where did Prof. Patten find in any religious system the strange notion that the "supernatural" is due to the desire to get to God by getting away from nature? Surely this again is turning things topsy-turvy, and apparently for no other purpose than to be "contrary." It is hard to retain one's patience and courtesy with such a statement coming from a man of thought and learning. If this is what we are to expect from "an economist on the road to philosophy," as Prof. Patten describes himself, it would be well to put up a signboard on the road such as one sees at the head of "Divinity Avenue" at Cambridge marked "Dangerous ground. Trespassing not allowed."

The element "natural" in "supernatural" has of course nothing to do with the conception of nature, but it is merely a convenient term to indicate what seems easily possible. The contrast to "supernatural" in religious parlance is human or if you choose "human nature," but not Nature with a capital N. "To get away from nature means approach to God" in religious parlance, according to Prof. Patten! The entire history of religion contradicts this statement, for religion starts everywhere with the impression made upon man by the phenomena of nature. The gods of primitive religion and of most advanced religions are personifications of the powers of nature and "the doctrine of the one supreme God" is reached everywhere by the realization (whether true or not is not to the point) that there is unity in nature. Let Prof. Patten study the philosophy of the Upanisheds of India if he desires to see how the theory of an all pervading power is reached through getting close to nature and not by getting away from it. Prof. Patten says (p. 80) that it is "a reversal of our religious education to associate God with the residual instead of the primary forces of nature." That is exactly what religious education does not do and never has done. Even the Christian anchorite or the Hindu ascetic who runs away from the wickedness of the world and the sinfulness of life does not run away from nature, on the contrary he returns to nature, there to find the God that he seeks for in vain in the habitations of men.

The task of the reviewer who is thus obliged at almost every point to controvert the views set forth is not agreeable. It is therefore a relief in conclusion to agree with Prof. Patten in emphasizing the value of the economic factor in explaining some of the phenomena of religion. The economic conditions under which a people lives have unquestionably much to do with the character of its religious beliefs. The thought is familiar to students ever since the days of Buckle, and has been emphasized by writers like Westermarck, Höffding, Tylor, Reinach—and even Anatole France. No doubt much more remains to be done in this field, and scattered throughout Prof. Patten's book suggestions are thrown out which point out the further lines to be followed in such investigations. For these suggestions, which it is to be hoped will be taken up by some of Prof. Patten's pupils or readers and carefully and systematically worked out, we should be grateful. Prof. Patten has also rendered a real service in calling attention to the social aspects of religion, though if by the title of his book he wishes to indicate that religion rests on a "social basis" it must be questioned whether he has proved his point.

We venture to think that a writer who proposes to establish the "Social Basis of Religion" should begin by discussing some of the definitions for religion proposed by students of the subject, and after criticising them to propose, if he so chooses, one of his own which he should put forward as a working hypothesis calculated to explain the chief phenomena of religion. This would involve a survey of the main ideas to be found in primitive forms of religion and in the chief of the dvanced forms. Had Prof. Patten done this he would never have committed the fatal mistake of identifying religion with Christianity. The next logical step would have been to indicate specifically and not by mere generalizations the economic and social aspects of the main religious beliefs, with due consideration of the views and investigations of those who have written on these subjects. Scientific investigation must not begin with a tabula rasa, but always connect itself in historical sequence with previous efforts. The only excuse for writing a serious book is the conviction of an author that he can advance upon his predecessors, and the chief reason for writing one is to prepare the way for the next work on the subject. All scientific work of value is continuous, and even where a new departure is made by an investigator it must in order to carry conviction connect itself with its predecessors. To ignore what others have done, and in this particular instance to discuss religion without a full consideration of the religious history of mankind so far as this has been ascertained by students of the subject whose activity and industry have been one of the features of modern science, is to lay oneself open to the charge of trespassing on a field which one has not sufficiently cultivated for oneself. A form of originality which consists in spinning out one's own thoughts, however brilliant and suggestive, without anticipating the objections to be urged, may have its uses as a mental stimulus, but the ultimate verdict in regard to it must be a non sequitur.

A Cheering Arabian Plant.

From the Washington Post.

"I saw a little of Arabia in my trip around the world by way of the Suez Canal," said Reuben Ferguson of Maryland. "An English tourist suggested that I ought to take a turn with the laughing plant of the Arabian region. He had a native find some of the plant and the seeds thereof, predicting that if I would make a tea out of the seeds or even make the seeds and leaves into a powder and take a dose of it occasionally the effect would be cheering and that I would desire to laugh for an hour or more without apparent reason.

"Once assured that there was no danger from the effects I tried the seeds and am ashamed to tell what others told me of my antics. It was a case of high jinks, dancing and foolishness both in conversation and actions. I cannot recall what I said or what sort of capers I was guilty of, but those who were with me seemed to take delight in telling of my intoxication and the utter nonsense of my conversation. Once they had told me of a few things I decided to have nothing more to do with the laughing plant."

The Better of the Trade.

From the Mobile Register.

Green McCurtain, once chief of the Choctaws, had a very high opinion of the business astuteness of white men. "No Indian can get the better of a paleface," Chief McCurtain said to a Guthrie reporter during the recent Oklahoma investigation. "And when two palefaces get bargaining together, then it is like cutting diamonds with diamonds. Two Oklahoma palefaces once hunted in my camp. They spent the evening with me and over the fire and the fire water they began to barter and trade and to make deals and dickers. Finally Bill said:

"'Sam, let's trade horses—my bay for your roan.'

"'It's a go,' Sam agreed. 'The trade's a go. Shake on it, partner.'

"They shook hands. Then Bill said with a loud laugh:

"'Sam, I've bested ye this time. My hoss is dead. Died yesterday.'

"'So's mine dead,' said Sam. 'Died this morn'n'. And what's more, I've took his shoes off.'"